

boon that it would be to give millions of working class people more purchasing power, supporting business, and supporting economic growth.

And we have a bipartisan farm bill. Sure it has got some problems. I don't know how everybody would vote on it, but it ought to come to the floor of the House for a "yes" or "no" vote. We could do that next week.

The list goes on. Unfortunately, it is completely fair to characterize this Republican-led House as a do-nothing Congress. Sometimes, though, it seems as though the things we have actually done have only made things worse.

In March, we allowed the harmful across-the-board sequester cuts to go into effect. Nobody here tried to stop them. On our side, we tried to stop them. Nobody did anything on the other side. Those draconian cuts went into effect, slowed economic growth, and cost hundreds of thousands of Americans their jobs.

In October, the gridlock and dysfunction shut down the Federal Government for 2 weeks—the first such shutdown in two decades. That cost this economy \$24 billion. We can't let that happen in the future.

I am only a freshman, just finishing my first year in Congress, but I can tell you one thing I know: this is no way to run this government. We have got to get back to legislating, doing the work of the American people, the way the Framers of this government intended it to be done.

□ 1030

We can just kind of go back. Some of you might remember "Schoolhouse Rock," how a bill becomes a law. The House passes a bill, the Senate does its work, passes a bill, we go to conference, we work out the differences, and send that on to the President for his signature or for a veto. That is the way we legislate.

Yet, we continue to lurch from crisis to crisis and not let the will of the American people be manifest in the laws that we write. My constituents, and all Americans, deserve a Congress that is serious about the work of the American people and ready to get to work to grow our economy, to support manufacturing, to strengthen the middle class.

I am ready to work in a bipartisan fashion. I think most of us are here to take on these big problems that our country faces. Now is not the time for more dithering or delay. Now is certainly not the time for a vacation.

Look, I would love to be able to go home and spend the next couple of weeks with my family. You know, we spend a lot of time away from home. But the folks that we represent expect us to get our work done.

So I, Mr. Speaker, am one who is willing to just stay here. Let's come back to work on Monday, and let's stay here until we get this important work done.

Let's take the Make It In America agenda to support American manufac-

turing; let's bring it to the floor. You don't want to vote for it, don't vote for it. But we ought to consider these important pieces of legislation that are important to our economy and not leave town without taking up the important work that we are charged with doing.

I represent Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, older industrial cities that helped build the manufacturing base of our economy. They depend on the Congress to do the work that we were sent here to do. We shouldn't go home. We should stay here and finish our work.

IRAN NEGOTIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, for 34 years, the United States and Iran have had no diplomatic relations. Iran has escalated its nuclear weapons program and hostile rhetoric.

The United States has upped sanctions and threats of military force. There can be little doubt that, when our diplomats and politicians say all options are on the table, we mean military force.

And yet, today, under the leadership of President Obama, we have an opportunity to change all that, to avoid the prospect of war or a nuclear-armed Iran. We have a chance to set a new course, a new path. Instead of the collision course, we have an off-ramp, an off-ramp to peace, diplomacy and international cooperation; and we must take it.

This is our best opportunity in 30 years to advance the interests of the United States vis-à-vis Iran. It is our best chance to make sure that the Middle East is as free and safe as possible of nuclear weapons.

The Iranian people defied the odds and elected a moderate President, Hassan Rouhani. President Rouhani has condemned the inflammatory rhetoric of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He has promised to improve Iran's relationship to the West.

Now, instead of moving forward toward the brink of war, the United States and Iran are negotiating, talking; and this is a good thing. This is the way countries should pursue their interests. This is the way to avoid war.

Through diplomacy, the United States and its allies have frozen Iran's nuclear program for the first time in more than a decade. The agreement imposes daily inspections to ensure Iran will not develop a nuclear weapon, and Iran has made agreements to move this process forward.

Ending our decades-long cold war with Iran isn't going to happen overnight; but through robust, sustained diplomacy, we may prevent an Iranian nuclear weapon and disastrous war and spare thousands of our children and theirs from a horrible situation.

We cannot achieve these goals if Congress undermines these negotiations,

and I have supported sanctions in the past. In fact, I have a very good friend and constituent who is in the Chamber today who has supported sanctions. She was born and raised in Iran, is very concerned about the human rights situation there, and has informed me over the years about the best position that I might take. And she also says now is not the time to hit the accelerator; it is the time to let diplomacy work.

These sanctions would undermine the confidence of our international partners, including the P5+1. China, Russia, the United States, Germany, and France are all part of this negotiation with Iran. And if we up sanctions while we have claimed that we want to work with them to have a reduction in nuclear weaponry in Iran, they may well see this as a break and a breach of faith with them, which could set us all back.

It has not been easy to get Iran, Russia, and China to the table. We have them there. Let's not lose this chance.

New sanctions stand to kill any hope for diplomacy. Iran's Foreign Minister, Javad Zarif, has said that if Congress imposes new sanctions, "the entire deal is dead."

Is that what we want?

New sanctions will not increase our negotiating power. If they would, the White House certainly would have told us so. In fact, the White House has warned that new sanctions will undermine negotiations.

Negotiations over the next 6 months are the only way to guarantee that Iran will not develop a nuclear weapon and will set itself on a path to rejoin the world of nations. And this could well improve the human rights situation in Iran, as it has no justification for the police state which denies human rights.

Congress should give diplomats space to do their jobs. Undercutting diplomacy with new sanctions would put our country on the path to war.

The choice is clear. We can try to negotiate a deal that prevents an Iranian nuclear weapon and avoids a nuclear conflict, or we can dismiss this opportunity, pile on more sanctions, derail diplomacy, and continue toward war.

Americans don't want another war. The best way to honor our men and women in uniform is to avoid unnecessary war. My son is Active Duty military. I am speaking from a personal place as well.

Americans support a negotiated deal with Iran by a 2-1 ratio; 68 percent say Congress should not take action that would block an agreement.

Passing any punitive measures, including a sense of Congress tying the President's hands, is a mistake. It will not help; and if Congress wants to help, we should set up a people-to-people exchange. We should set up a Congress-to-Congress exchange and move forward.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded not to make reference to occupants of the gallery.

The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of the proceedings is in violation of the rules of House.

THE HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, in a couple of days we will have a moment of silence in respect and memory of the victims of Sandy Hook Elementary. We need to take those moments to pause, reflect, and pray.

However, afterwards, we cannot be silent on the need to get something done, on the need to pass comprehensive and meaningful legislation, and the need to help the mentally ill.

Has the world changed since Newtown and the other tragedies?

Sadly, little has been done to get those who need help the help they need. In the past few decades, this Nation has moved forward in knowledge of what it takes to help, but has moved backward in getting the help done. And where there is no help, there is no hope.

We have fewer psychiatric hospital beds, fewer outpatient treatment options, restrictions on the use of medications that can and do help those who are mentally ill, too few psychiatrists and psychologists and clinical social workers, especially child and adolescent specialists, and especially ones who are trained and specialize in treating the seriously mentally ill.

We have too many barriers that prevent doctors from communicating with parents of the sons and daughters with persistent serious mental illness.

We have Federal barriers that block treatment, Federal dollars that go to grants for programs that do not work. The National Institute of Mental Health has insufficient money to engage in needed research.

First responders who are called to deal with mental health crises have little or no training on what to do, and they miss critically important actions.

Treatment delayed is treatment denied; and where there is no help, there is no hope.

Today, I am introducing the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. It increases access to trained professionals at community health centers and community mental health centers, and refocuses the government spending on programs that work and gets to the people that need it in communities and not remain in bureaucracies.

It reforms government spending to eliminate redundancy and waste and refocuses us on getting evidence-based help. It brings scientific objectivity to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

It opens up the door of communication between doctors and parents and legal guardians of those with mental illness. It increases inpatient treatment options and availability. No more being told that there are no more beds. Take your son or daughter home, no matter how much they are at risk of hurting you or themselves.

It increases outpatient treatment options. It increases pharmaceutical treatment options. It reduces the warehousing of our persistently and seriously mentally ill in jails or homelessness.

It improves communication between primary care providers, psychiatrists, psychologists, and licensed mental health practitioners. It increases mental health courts. It provides training for first responders, and it gathers essential and critically important information on the relationship between mental illness and violence and victimization.

Bottom line: if we want to change these trends in victimization of the mentally ill and the persistently mentally ill; if we want to reduce the high number of suicides, homicide and assaults; if we want to get people treatment, not jail time, and not abandonment; if we want to help the tens of millions of people with mental illness and the hundreds of millions of friends and relatives who are emotionally and financially strained by the untreated problems of mental illness; if we want to prevent the Newtowns, Tucsons, Auroras, Pittsburghs, and Columbines, we have to do something comprehensive, research based, and we have to do it now.

What we need is not only for Congress to act, but during these next few weeks, while Congressmen and -women are back home, we need to hear from every doctor and first responder and teacher and parent and patient and consumer that we must act thoroughly and thoughtfully and must act now.

Those who need the help the most have the most trouble getting the help they need, and where there is no help there is no hope. We can and must and we will take mental illness out of the shadows of ignorance, despair, and neglect, and into that bright light of hope.

So I ask my colleagues to support this bill, the Helping Families and Mental Health Crisis Act, because treatment and action delayed is treatment denied.

Let us help American families get the help they need because where there is no help, there is no hope.

THE MOST UNACCOMPLISHED CONGRESS IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, we are in the closing hours of the first year of the 113th Con-

gress, and the pundits who examine Congresses past and present have concluded that this is the most unaccomplished Congress in the history of the country.

We have passed a total of 56 bills here in this Congress. The fact is, we have taken 239 days off, and we have worked 133 days. And let's be honest with ourselves here: those 133 days often included a Monday or a Tuesday where we came in at 6:30 in the evening and took a handful of votes on some non-controversial issues. Where most of us come from, that is not a day's work.

And by the same token, more often than not, we left on a Thursday or a Friday, somewhere after taking a few votes that morning, and then heading back to wherever we were headed.

Back in 1948, Harry Truman got elected President of the United States by campaigning against the do-nothing 80th Congress in 1948. Well, guess what, that Congress passed over 900 bills. And we are looking at 56 here at the halfway mark?

I cannot begin to imagine how history is going to evaluate this Congress. The Wall Street Journal said:

This Congress is long on partisanship, indecision, and brinksmanship.

Others have constantly referred to the fact that most of what is done here and considered here in the past year has been political posturing in preparation for the next election.

□ 1045

To be fair, we have accomplished some things here: the middle-class tax cut, Hurricane Sandy relief, the Violence Against Women Act. We passed a couple of appropriations bills, and we may be on the brink here of actually passing a budget bill, which would be most important and quite an accomplishment. Not to mention, we formally recognized Soap Box Derby Day, and we have made it possible for hunters to buy their duck stamps online.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that we are not getting the job done. And the fact also remains that, in this country, the rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, and the middle class in this country is getting crushed. We are looking at large deficits and broken priorities and a broken government, and we are not addressing those issues of our time.

I did a little research. I have the unique perspective of having served some 32 years ago, and at that time we had between 7,000 and 8,000 subcommittee, full committee, conference committee hearings, markups, and meetings. This Congress, by contrast, has had 500, and most of those were procedural and Rules Committee meetings.

The Speaker himself said that we need to return to regular order in this country if we are going to get things done. "Regular order," for those who don't know, means going to work 5 days a week, like everybody else in America. It means working full days. It